A

SERMON

Preached before the

HONOURABLE

Judges of Assize,

AT THE

Cathedral in *Lincoln*, *July* 21. 1673.

Sir William Humble Baronet,

BEING

HIGH SHERIFF of the County.

By *Richard Hollingworth*, Minister of God's Word at *West-ham* near *London*.

London, Printed for *Robert Boulter*, at the *Turks-Head* in *Cornhil*, over against the *Royal Exchange*, 1673.

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TO THE

RIGHT REVEREND

Father in God

WILLIAM Lord Bishop of Lincoln.

My Lord,

WHen I had the honour last to wait upon your Lordship in your own Palace at Lincoln, *you who pleased to signifie such an approbation of this Discourse, as to command from me a Copy of it, which when understood by some other Persons of no small account, I was vehemently prest by them to make it Publick, they hoping thereby some*

good might accrew to that Church, in the Government of which your Lordship bears so considerable a share to so good purposes: And being not willing to shun any opportunity whereby I might serve the Publick, obey your Lordship, and give contentment to my Friends, I buckled my self presently to a transcribing of it in order to the Press.

And now, such as it is, I present to your Lordship, desiring that as it derived the boldness of appearing abroad from your Lordships good liking of it, so it may receive Protection from your Lordships Power and Authority. For Discourses of this nature, if they be not well fortified, your Lordship knows are quickly blasted by foul Reproaches, and unworthy Reflections either upon the Authors or the Principles; and what men want in Argument and Proof, they usually make up in Slander and unjust Imputations. And truly, had I not had a greater value for Truth, for the

Peace

Peace and Settlement of the Kingdom, for the prosperous and quiet Reign of our Great Master the King, then I have for mine own Esteem and Reputation, among some sorts of people, I would never have made my first Essay in Publick of so ungrateful a nature, as I know this must needs be to many men.

But we are to consider we were not born for our selves; and so that the Cause of God may be carried on, the Interest of the Protestant Religion maintained. I think every man ought to make a venture of all that is near and dear to him, and think himself very happy, if, with the loss of all, he can be serviceable to so great and good Purposes: A thing which we whose years have not been multiplied to the number of your Lordships, have very great encouragement to do, both from your Lordships Example, and many other worthy Persons in the late bad Times, who, to defend the Principles stated and recommended in this Discourse,

suffered

suffered you Selves to be stript of all those external Comforts which Philosophers tell us have a very great share, in contributing to our happiness while we are here. But now as God hath been pleased to restore the Church to its ancient Constitution, and your Lordship, and many other eminent Sufferers, not onely to its Wealth and Revenue, but its Defence and Support; so I pray God it may continue with the advantage of such Lights as long as the Sun *and* Moon *endure. For 'tis plain, take away the Church, and destroy the Principles by which it is setled, and we introduce all disorder and confusion into the World immediately, and every man turns Reformer, and every week presents us with a new Model, vainly boasting it self fetched out of the Old Gospel, which of how dismal consequence to Religion, and to civil Societies, is no difficult thing to judge.*

But

But that ſuch a Deſolation may never overtake the Church again, thanks be to God, hath been the care of this preſent Parliament, in ſeveral Acts framed on purpoſe; is the endeavour and care of your Lordſhip, and ſeveral others of great worth and moment, and ſhall, I aſſure you, be the daily Prayer (as indeed it ought to be of every good man) of him,

Who is your Lordſhips humble and faithful Servant to Command,

Weſtham, Aug. 7.

Richard Hollingworth.

TO

TO

TO THE

HONOURABLE

Sir William Humble Baronet,

High Sheriff of the County of *Lincoln*.

SIR,

IT was a very wise return that a Reverend Divine, now in being, made, when the Act of Uniformity *was framing; Who being asked,* What he intended to do? *Answered,* That if the Act was tolerable, he would comply; *and the reason was, because he dreaded* Faction, *not knowing when once he got into it, how far it would drive him, meaning, I suppose, that when men once come to think themselves hardly and unkindly treated by their Governors, and see the Encouragements of the Nation disposed of to others, whom they think not so truly worthy as themselves; this works such a discontent in them, as dispo-*

ses them to any Action or Opinion, whereby they may keep at the greatest distance from the Commands of Governors, and express their hatred both to their Persons and Authority.

And truly Sir, we have sadly seen this thing, that he feared of himself, come to pass in many others, and those who some years agone contested with the spirit of Separation, and both preached and wrote vigorously against the Principle from whence it took its birth and being, and denounced the heaviest Curses both of Heaven and Earth against all those who were Fautors and Promotors of it; and now (I am afraid too much thorough a spirit of discontent and anger at the Government under which they live) baptized into the same Principles, and become Examples of the same Separation, which they condemned so violently, and with so great an heat in others, and cannot be content onely to meet and gather people from the several Quarters both of City and Country, but they must choose the same time with those who are the onely legally constituted Preachers; and that is not all, but they pitch in those places, and plant themselves in those streets, where they acknowledge the Parish Minister is worthy and laborious, and where they know there is Love and Unity betwixt both the Pastor and his People.

And

And what this looks like, but revenge against the Government, and an obstinate resolution to do what in them lies to undermine the present Ministry, I cannot tell; a thing which I am sure the Puritans *of old, whom they pretend to be followers of, would have disowned, and vehemently declaimed against.*

Sir, The sad and serious consideration of this, was one occasion of bending my thoughts upon the following Subject, after you had been pleased to give me an invitation to appear in so honourable and judicious an Assembly. And, in earnest, he that considers well what must needs be the Consequences of all this hereafter, he must necessarily vindicate any honest-hearted and true English-man, *that stands up, and according to the power he is invested with, endeavours to put a stop to these irregular proceedings. And those men who, notwithstanding all that can be said or urged to them from their former professed and avowed Practices and Principles, will yet so far countenance their rage and prejudice, as to continue in this unseasonable and irreligious Schisme, I dare tell them, that they are making Rods for, and putting Weapons into their Adversaries hands, wherewith to fight against themselves.*

And if they would but impartially look back upon the late bad Times, and consider when they had thrown

thrown down the Churches Walls and Fences, what was the naturall product of those Principles by which they found so great fault with, and afterwards destroyed the Constitutions and Injunctions of our Church, and how quickly the Wars and furious Billows of Separation (raised and occasioned by those Principles) flowed in upon them to their total overthrow and destruction. I am confident, if they be not resolved upon Ruine, it would either bring them back to an honest and just compliance with the Orders of our Church, or else make them more modest in their dissenting from us.

And now Sir, if any man shall be provoked against me for this plain and honest dealing both here and in the subsequent Discourse, I have no more to say, but that I am resolved to be patient under his Censures. He shall be the object of my Pity, the subject of my Prayers, but not mine anger; and to this purpose, I shall onely desire that I may be furnished with some good degrees and proportions of that excellent meekness and ingenuity, of that admirable candor & obligingness, which I have alwayes found both in your Self, and in the several worthy Branches of your Family, by which you have, and alwayes shall engage to any Service him,

Who is your humble and faithful Servant to Command,

Richard Hollingworth.

Titus 3. Verse 1.

Put them in mind to be subject to Principalities and Powers, to obey Magistrates, to be ready to every good work.

THe Honour and Reputation of the Christian Religion are things which every man ought to be tender of, careful to maintain, and forward to spread and propagate abroad: and he that does any thing, and lives in the omission of any Duty, whereby it is eclipsed or darkned, whereby standers-by have any occasion either to think amiss, or to speak evil and reproachful words of it; he acts neither according to those Obligations that in Baptism he laid upon himself, nor any wayes in correspondence to the intrinsick worth and excellence of the thing it self: For Religion having so near a relation to the Soul, and being so immediately conducive to the true and proper interest of it; it ought to be every mans care to carry himself wor-

thy and becoming of it. Now among many other things whereby this admirable contrivance of Heaven did at first thrive and prosper, and obtain such a general footing in the Eastern parts of the World, you shall find this one (to wit) the peaceable and obedient carriage of those who were its first Votaries to their Governors, and those who were set and appointed over them, their readiness to execute their Commands, their willingness to undergo their Censures and their Punishments; their Patience under all those Afflictions their Profession did expose them to, did hugely recommend the Doctrine of Christianity to many that stood gazing upon them, and engaged them in a studying of, and afterwards in an hearty complyance with that which was attended with so rare and excellent, with so unfrequent and so unknown a temper. And when Christians lost this spirit, and began to dispute it with their Governors at first with words, and afterwards with blows; when, instead of the meekness and patience of their Ancestors, they were cloathed with the revenge and malice, with the cruelty and bitterness of lasps'd and apostatized Spirits, and every little fancyed Provocation put them upon plotting mischief, and overturning Governments, why then this incomparable product of Divine Wisdom (I mean Religion) lost

loſt ground, and a great part of the World, in ſtead of turning or continuing Chriſtians, betook themſelves either to the Tents of *Mahomet*, or elſe obſtinately perſevered in Heatheniſh Idolatry and Superſtition.

And how much this Nation peculiarly hath gained by the late unhappy Breaches, and unnatural War in this particular, pray let the actions and common carriage of the Inhabitants give evidence: And if Atheiſm and Prophaneneſs, if an increaſe of all manner of wickedneſs be any way for the promotion and advancement of Religion, then indeed we have cauſe to be thankful for the ſpirit of Sedition and Rebellion; but if the contrary (as no one of common ſenſe or reaſon can doubt) then we have all cauſe to bewail it, and endeavour for the future the prevention of it. And truly I know no other nor better way, than mens hearkening to Reaſon, and diſcharging themſelves of thoſe fond Notions, and groundleſs Perſwaſions, whereby they are drawn into a liking and allowance of ſuch dangerous and diſturbing Principles: And that I might contribute to ſo good and neceſſary a work, I have made choice of theſe words, *Put them in mind to be ſubject to Principalities, &c.*

In the treating upon which words, I ſhall do theſe three things.

1. Shew what things we are to obey Magistrates in.

2. What things we are to refuse Obedience in. For 'tis possible for a Magistrate to command unlawful things, such as he hath no right to impose, and we no liberty, without violating the Injunctions of an higher Prince, and so consequently contracting guilt upon the Conscience to comply withall.

3. We will consider by what wayes we may understand our Duty in both these respects.

1. If we would be satisfied what things exact our Obedience; I answer, all Lawful and honest things, such as have a foundation both in the general and particular Precepts of holy writ. Or else,

2. Such as have no contradiction to them; then farther, if we would know in what things we are not in an active manner to obey our Superiors in, that may be quickly understood, to wit, in such things as are as certainly moral Evils, as Obedience to Authority is a real good; and if we barely doubt, and are not as well satisfied of the real turpitude and evil of a thing commanded, as we are that Obedience to Authority is good, then we stand obliged to obey; and he that upon this Principle does refuse, he lays no foundation for a good and comfortable account at the last day in the other world.

1. We

1. We are to obey Magistrates in all Lawful and honest things, such as have a foundation both in the general and particular Precepts of holy Scripture; and though Obedience to such Commands is not simply fetch'd from the Authority of the Magistrate, but the Authority of God, yet we may justly say the Magistrates interposal strengthens the Obligation, and the neglect or contempt of the Law under such circumstances introduces a greater blemish into, and fixes a deeper stain upon the Soul. And though he sins severely that breaks so much as we are obliged to keep of the Sabbath, notwithstanding the Injunction of the fourth Commandment, yet the sin is heightned if he break the Sabbath after strict Laws of Authority super-added thereunto; because the Principles from whence so great an affront to Laws do flow are more bold and daring, and the contempt is offered as well to the visible, as the Power that is invisible; and the man sins as well in the face of present punishment, as of future pain and torment; and he offends not onely the Law by which the Command is bound upon us, but the great Law too, by which he is so strictly enjoyned to obey those that are set over us. And therefore consider thus much, that though Drunkenness and Swearing, Fornication and Adultery, and such other notorious Impieties are severely

ſeverely forbidden by God in Scripture, and upon that ſcore lay us under an Obligation to crucifie all thoſe luſts that diſpoſe and incline us thereunto: Yet we act under further preſſures to abſtain from them, and that from the Laws of Man, which if we do offend, we contract a greater guilt, and do pollute our Souls with a more ſpreading and contaminating filth.

2. We are to obey Magiſtrates as well in thoſe things that have no contradiction in them to the Commands of holy Scripture; an aſſertion, which if but well weighed, and rightly underſtood, would ſilence many of thoſe unhappy Differences that are now abroad, and pleaded for with ſo great and extream a paſſion. The Word of God, as to many things, hath onely given us the Rules of Duty in general, and left the preciſe and particular determination of things as they relate to the ſeveral advantages of Societies, and Bodies Politick, to the Governours under whom we live. And indeed had God in the holy Scripture determined every particular carriage in all thoſe various relations in which we ſtand, had He reſolved that no one thing ſhould ever be done, no attempt ſhould be made, no enterprize ſet upon, no deſign purſued without a particular encouragement, and allowance from

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some particular Command in Scripture, the Bible certainly must have swelled up into a Volume too big for most to buy, and for men of business to consult and read. And therefore, He having given Men rational Souls, capable of prudential and wise Considerations, He was pleased, in many things, to prescribe our Duties to us in general, and leave the particular accommodation of them to those general Rules, to our own prudence and discretion, to our own honesty and fidelity; and though He enjoyns us to live soberly, yet he does not acquaint us with the fixt measures of Meat and Drink beyond which we are bound not to go, but He supposes us so wise, or at least that we ought to be so, as by reflecting upon the temperature of our Bodies, to know what is most conducive to our health, and to order our selves accordingly: And though He enjoyn us to live righteously, yet He does not tell us of all the Rules and Measures of exact justice between man and man, but leaves them to the legal constitution of a Nation to decide. And when He commands us, by the Apostle, to let all things be done decently and in order in the Service of God, He does not make such a particular Description of those things in which that order and decency does consist, as He did under the Law of *Moses*; but con-

conſidering that the Goſpel was not to be confined to one Nation or People, as the Law of *Moſes* was, and that the Cuſtoms of Countries alter the ſeveral notions of decency and order: The Goſpel therefore, I ſay, being deſigned to be œcumenical and diſperſed over the face of the whole Earth, He left the Determinations of theſe outward circumſtances to the Governors of thoſe ſeveral places. And though I know ſome men look upon this aſſertion as an impeachment of the faithfulneſs of Chriſt, and that if this be true, have the confidence to affirm, That *Moſes* did in point of Truſt excel him; yet he that ſhall conſider what it is that the Apoſtle, *Heb.* 3. 5,6. in that ſo often miſ-quoted and miſ-interpreted place does mean; namely, his compleat fulfilling the Office of a Mediator, he will quickly find that Chriſt looſes nothing of his Supremacy and Prærogative, of his Soveraignty and Dominion by a Princes care, that men do not addreſs themſelves to God in a rude and diſorderly manner; and beſides, we may well look upon this power we give to the civil Magiſtrate, as no abridgment of the juſt Power of this great Prince the *Lord Jeſus*, till theſe men who raiſe this Objection can produce a Government of their own ſo modelled by plain and unforced Scripture, as to have nothing of humane

counſel

counſel and prudential determination in it, till they can bring us out a Draught ſo exactly to the Pattern in the Mount, that Humane Invention is not concerned in one ſtroke or line of it; and truly until this be done, I think the quarrel againſt the innocent Conſtitutions of our Church is unjuſtly maintained.

Now it being ſo that God hath entruſted Governours with ſuch a Power, we muſt have a very ſpecial care how we part with the Duty of Obedience to thoſe who are our Rulers. If the things commanded be not in plain down-right terms, or by evident and eaſie conſequence, oppoſite to the Word of God, the Rule of our Faith and Manners; if there do not appear in them ſome real turpitude and filthineſs, ſome immorality and natural evil, we muſt conſider well before we ſhake hands, and part with our Governours; for nothing will vindicate our Conſciences at the laſt day, and embolden them to lift up their heads, and plead their cauſe, in caſe of non-obedience to Authority, but commands bearing a perfect and flat contradiction to the Laws of God; 'twas this made the three Children with ſo great and undiſmayed Countenances enter into the fiery Furnace.

And therefore those men who in compliance with a boundless passion, or out of disdain of any particular Person, or from a Principle of Pride, because they may not with the *Pharisee* sit in the highest place of the *Synagogue*, refuse to come to the publick and constituted places of Divine Worship; why, these men do perfectly affront the Law, and set up their own private wills against the publick; they are real Breakers of the Fifth Commandment, and Sinners against all those Injunctions to Obedience with which both the Old and New Testament does abound. And they have no plea commonly for what they do, but what is fetched from those little Magazines which our Gallants are wont to make use of for their duelling, and their other Sins; namely, that they cannot do this or that in point of Honour, it is below them to make such ungentile condescensions, and the World, forsooth, would laugh at them as arrant Fools, and hen-hearted Persons, if they should submit. Well, but how strong, and of what force these Arguments will be either upon a death-bed, or at a solemn trial, I leave you all to judge. I am sure then nothing will bear us out for the contemning of those Laws made by the wisdom of God's Trustees and Representatives, but some real and apparent evil that was in the matter of

of those Commands; and he that is not as certain of the wickedness of the thing imposed, as he is of the goodness of Obedience to Authority, does not deal justly and with integrity with his Conscience, if he disobeys.

And truly, I wish with all mine heart, that this thing was but well weighed, and thereby better understood. I am certain it is a Principle which would very much heal the Breaches, and break down those walls of Separation that are too many and too high amongst us; it would very much preserve and keep up the honour and veneration of Authority, and Dignities would be more in esteem then now they are. The reputation of all good Laws would be in heart, and civil Sanctions would lead a better and more quiet life then now they do, (things very desirable by every man, who understands the interest of all united and incorporated Bodies whatsoever); for when men once by vertue of their Principles and religious pretences hang loose to Authority, and entertain mean and despicable thoughts of what is prudently thought convenient to be enacted into a Law, they alwayes grow (unless prevented by an excellent natural disposition) tumultuous and seditious, and stand ready upon every slender *alarum* to besiege and at-

tempt the honour and the quietneſs of that Government under which they live, and ſo they continue, if the natural influence and tendency of theſe Principles be not prevented, plotting and conſpiring till they have either by the hands of violence forced the enjoyment of their own Fancies, or elſe by the deſtruction of their proper Maſters, uſurped the Throne themſelves.

And now by what hath been diſcourſed under this firſt Head, you have a direct anſwer to the ſecond thing propounded, to wit, wherein we are not to obey Magiſtrates. If we are verily aſſured that the thing commanded is a real Evil, we are then with all modeſty to with-draw our ſelves from the Command, and with patience to ſuffer the Penalties that are laid upon us; and he that does ſo is a good Chriſtian, and a good ſubject, and does nothing that can in the leaſt impeach his Principles, or diſcredit his Profeſſion: For thus did the Primitive Chriſtians of old, and all other good men truly influenced by the Divine Spirit ever ſince.

But on the contrary, if men either from a bare jealouſie that the thing commanded is unlawful, or out of revenge, becauſe their own Fancies and Opinions do not take place, and have not a pub-

lick

lick countenance and encouragement, do ſpeak evil of Dignities, and whiſper againſt the Government, and by ſly and ſubtile, remote and dark expreſſions, either in Prayer or Preaching convey into the minds of people ſuſpicious thoughts of the Powers that are above them: If in praying for a Princes Reformation, they make ſuch a particular deſcription of his faults, as render him odious to his people; why, theſe men are ſo far from being good Subjects, or good Chriſtians, that they deſerve to be marked out for Firebrands, and kept within bounds, as Perſons whoſe deſign is nothing elſe but Sword and Battel, as men who, like the Diſciples, know not what ſpirit they are of; or elſe if they do, are reſolved to ruine themſelves, provided they can but work the deſtruction of others at the ſame time. A *Principle* ſo far from having any thing that is maſculine and generous, that is Evangelical and Divine in it, that it is raked out of the bottomleſs Pit, and never knew what it was to have a being, till by a voluntary lapſe and fall from *God*, Angels were turned into Devils.

And now if any man by what hath been diſcourſed, is convinced of his Duty of Obedience to God's publick Miniſters and Inſtruments of Juſtice, and is deſirous to underſtand how he may know this

this Duty, and distinguish between Commands Lawful, and those that are Unlawful, by reason of their being morally evil. I must then, in his inquiry, desire him to take these things along with him by way of caution; which is the third thing propounded to be discoursed of.

1. That he never judge of any thing commanded by his Rulers, by those odious and scandalous titles men of perverse and refractory spirits fix upon it, but let him bring the thing to a setled and appointed Rule, and according to its agreement or disagreement with that, either close with it, or else shun it, for they are Rules prescribed by God the great Law-Maker, by which we must be judged at the last day; and therefore they are the same Rules by which our Actions must be regulated. It hath been a common way you know to revile some things that have been enjoyned amongst us, under the name of Popish and Superstitious; a charge considered in it self, and where 'tis truly laid, very weighty and worthy of every mans thoughts and care. For to call and assert a thing Popish and Superstitious, is to assert it as a thing having no foundation in Scripture, and yet thrust and obtruded upon the minds of men; as a necessary Article of Faith, a thing to be believed and entertained with as true and divine a Faith,

Faith, as any of those Articles which are contained in that which we call the Apostles Creed; and under this notion do the Papists assert Transubstantiation, Invocation of Saints, Prayer for the Dead, Purgatory, &c. And he that will not swallow these down, he is proscribed and cut off, as a Person to whom Satan hath the greatest right. Now I must confess, that if any Magistrate impose any thing that is not either plainly laid down, or easily deduced and drawn from the holy Scripture, and under such a severe Notion as this, we stand no wayes obliged to an active Obedience to his Laws, for therein that so often used, and so very much abused Text takes place, *Whether it be better to serve God or man, judge ye.* But on the contrary, if things commanded by the Authority and Wisdom of our Governors have no such necessity fixt upon them, and are declared to be alterable, and enjoyned onely as they are thought to minister to the purposes of Order, Decency, and Edification; and are declared to lay no further Obligation upon the Conscience, then was derived from those Texts of Scripture whereby we are commanded to obey our Governors, I think no wise man can justly, and upon serious thoughts, brand them with the name of Popish and Superstitious.

For,

For, in a word, the true proper and formal notion of Popery, is to force men with the same necessity to believe and practise such things as have no foundation in Scripture, but have been brought into the Church to serve the corrupt Humors, the proud Minds, and covetous Designs and Interests of the Court of *Rome*, as they do believe and practise: Those things which are plain and obvious in holy-Writ, which is certainly an inpairing and dividing the Kingly Office of Jesus Christ.

2. If you would know whether a matter commanded be good or evil, and so fit for your practise or forbearance, look into Scripture impartially, and compare one Text with another, and weigh the scope and design of the Pen-men in those several places, and be not resolved to bend and draw them to the Service of any Party or Opinion whatsoever: For this in all Ages hath done much wrong to Truth, and opened the very Floodgates of Disobedience, and contempt of humane Laws. For instance, if a man in order to keep you out of the loving and pleasant arms of Truth, and to fix you in a pernicious Principle or Opinion, say as the Apostle once said, *Come out from among them, and be you separate, and touch no unclean thing*, 2 Cor. 6. 17. Or as the same Apostle in another place, *Touch not, taste not, handle*

handle not; why, your business is to weigh and judiciously and deeply to consider upon what score these words were spoken, and what it was the Apostle designed to preserve the people to, whom he wrote from the pollution of; and upon search you will find, that when the Apostle cries, *Come out from among them*, he means from the Idolatry of the Heathens; and then you must be sure, that the Church from which you are tempted is as truly Idolatrous as that was out of which the Apostle invited the *Corinthians*, or else that Scripture will not be a sufficient warrant for your departure and separation from it. And when the Apostle, *Colos.* 2. 20, 21. advises them neither *to touch, nor taste, nor handle*, you will find they were certain Impositions, as abstaining from Marriage, and some sorts of Meats as utterly unlawful; which though they might be abstained from, yet when they were forbidden as things detestable, and unlawful in their own nature, the Apostle tells them, That it is giving away the liberty Christ had purchased for them; and this Text therefore, as many other which are quoted to very bad and pernicious purposes, will be found to strike indeed at the *Romish* Church, who, as I said before, imposes upon the minds of men things as absolutely necessary, which have no such

neceſſity neither in their own nature, nor by vertue of any Command from God; but it reaches not at all any legal Injunction, recommended as indifferent, and declared not to change its nature, but that it may be altered and removed out of the way, when the Governor ſees it good ſo to do.

And truly, if Scripture was but thus weighed, we ſhould ſoon come to an end of moſt of our unhappy Differences, that are now too much alive among us, and then Love and Unity, Amity and Friendſhip, Peace and Good Will, would have a greater room in the World then now they have. But then,

3. There is one thing more that I would recommend to every perſons conſideration, and that is when he enquires into the nature of the things commanded in order to his ſatisfaction, and more eſpecially, if he enquire after the lawfulneſs or unlawfulneſs of thoſe three Ceremonies, which are the great ſtones of offence at which ſo many perſons in this Kingdom ſtumble. I deſire him to conſider how doubtful and unſatisfied, how wavering and unreſolved many of thoſe perſons are who are the Ringleaders of Diſſention from our Church, and moſt ready to form men into Bodies and Parties againſt our ſetled Diſcipline, which to me is a conſideration of no ſmall ſtrength and force. For, notwithſtanding

ſtanding many indiſcreet men, with a very great and raiſed zeal, vent both in Pulpits, and other popular Diſcourſes, their Spleen and Anger againſt theſe Inſtitutions, fixing ſuch names upon them as they know will ſtir the choler of the more rude and ignorant ſort of people, ſuch whereby God in anger repreſents his indignation againſt the Heathen Idols; yet if you come to examine their judgments of theſe things, by ſome other actions, you will find they are not ſo rationally ſatisfied of the unlawfulneſs of theſe things, as by theſe furious Belches they would make the World believe.

He that conſiders how many of theſe angry men ſtudiouſly and adviſedly educate their Children, in order to the advantages and improvements of an Univerſity life, where, when they come, they are aſſured they muſt ſwear to obey their Governors and be obſervant of the Statutes; where they know they muſt wear a Surplice, and daily attend upon thoſe Prayers which they load with ſo many vile Reproaches; why, he muſt needs conclude them either men of no Conſcience, that will adviſedly ſend their Children to places, where they muſt certainly ſwear to, and live in the practice of ſuch things as in their own Opinion work in God the greateſt Diſpleaſure and Indignation (which I

thank God the honour I have for several Dissenters, will give me no liberty to credit them, or else (which indeed any man may more safely incline to) that they are not so fully satisfied in the Evil of these things, as in their transports and heats among popular Auditories they would make the World believe.

And farther, he that looks back upon a very few weeks since, and considers how many persons thoroughout this Nation, who were before professed Enemies to our Church, have, in compliance with a late seasonable Law, joyned with us in our Publick Worship, and devoutly used that Ceremony of kneeling at the Sacrament, which hath been so notoriously branded by many of their Masters; that Ceremony, I say, which is the onely one in which the Laity is concerned; he must needs say, that these are Demonstrations that neither they nor their Teachers are so well convinced of the Evil of these things, as they would (I will not judge for what ends) force upon the belief of other men. For if these things were so concluded, men of Principles and Conscience would rather loose their Estates and Lives, all that is near and dear to them, then comply; but being not so concluded, we find what little things serve to bring them back to our Communion; and since they

they are returned, I pray God keep them there; for I am assured they stand obliged so to do, for no man can withdraw from Obedience, but he that believes the things evil in their own nature that are commanded; and he that can once in a year, with a satisfied Conscience, obey Authority in any one thing commanded, he stands bound to do it every day in the year that he is called to express that Obedience: And whosoever does otherwise, he is false and perfidious, and Government hath no security from a man of such Principles at all. For to come to the legally setled places of Worship one day, and the next to follow the Camps of Separation, and so alternately, is an argument that not sense of Duty, but Humour and Fancy, Passion and Interest, governs and rules the man; from which government we may all well say, *Good Lord deliver us.*

Now let me intreat thee, whosoever thou art, when thou takest these things into thy thoughts, in order to thy satisfaction, let these actions of men be weighed, and I do not doubt, but then thou wilt equally be inclined to the evidence and fulness of the Arguments used on both sides; which if thou art, no question thou wilt be quickly found walking chearfully in the plain and harmless road of Duty and Obedience: For I am sure that Bug-bear words

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and reproachful Expreſſions have more prevented mens compliance with the Orders of our Church, then ever ſolid Proof and rational Arguments have done. And thus I have briefly diſcourſed the notion of Obedience, a thing certainly worthy of every mans conſideration; let me therefore in a word invite you all, according to thoſe ſeveral Orbs in which you move, and capacities and circumſtances in which you ſtand, to do all that lies in your power to ſpread abroad and propagate theſe Principles. To encourage you to which, I may boldly and yet ſafely ſay, That your Lives and Fortunes, your Liberties, and all other enjoyments lie at ſtake, and are near a ruine, if theſe Principles do not obtain. I liſt not to rake into former Sores, but yet this I will ſay, That from the want of theſe Notions of Obedience, I dare derive our former Commotions and Diſturbances, and the miſerable conſequences of them which to this day we feel; and he that notwithſtanding all that can be ſaid or felt, will yet hug thoſe two pernicious Principles (for ſo I may well call them) to wit, that the Magiſtrate hath nothing to do in Church affairs, and then that nothing muſt be done in or about Divine Worſhip but what there is a particular Preſcript for in Scripture. I ſay, he that will ſtill hold thoſe, I ſay no more, but that I pray God

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the Government of this Nation may never lie at his Feet; that he may alwayes be in Subjection, and never sit at the Helm; for doubtless these are Opinions that do naturally tend to set up Fancy against Judgment and Reason, and to make private groundless Interpretations of their own, the standards by which all things in Religion and Worship must be modelled; and when it comes to this, then farewel all Order and Decency. 'Tis this that breaks Church-windows, and defaces the goodly Monuments of Antiquity: 'Tis this that tears the comly Garments of the Priest in pieces, and fixes such odious Names upon that ancient Order of *Episcopacy*; and after that, calls all Messengers of the Gospel by the names of *Priests of Baal*, and *dumb Doggs*. 'Tis this that denies Children their right to the Ordinance of *Baptism*, and laughs at the solemn confirmation of them in that Faith, which by their Trustees they undertook to maintain and defend. Farther, 'tis this that makes such a noise and quoil about the Spirit of Prayer, and will allow nothing to come from God, but what is powred out without any regard to modesty, or sense of distance betwixt the Creator and the Creature: For had Reason and unprejudiced Judgment taken place, and Fancy waited upon them according to her bounden duty, we had not been troubled

troubled with those swarms of Heresies and poysonous Opinions that now fly up and down, to the great disturbance of Laws and Government, and to the molestation of mens minds and spirits, whereby they are taken off from the constant and laborious practice of those plain and clear Instances and Requisites of Religion, and hindered from the dutiful and necessary prosecution of those Callings and Imployments to which Divine Providence hath fixed them. Nay, in a word, 'tis this which, if it prevail, will at last be modelling the Civil Government, and altering that excellent Constitution, by which, at such times as these, Justice is brought to our very doors; for these are Principles very busie and pragmatical, and State as well as Church Affairs must be ordered by them. Now therefore, we are all obliged to do what in us lies to suppress and curb those Principles which give fancy so great a sway, and to settle all that belong to our care and charge in these generous and catholick notions of Obedience and Subjection; then may we hope to sit under our own Vines and Figg-trees with delight, then may we expect the return of Primitive Christianty again, wherein Faith and not Faction, Reason and not Fancy, internal Holiness, and not groundless and fond Opinions, shall prevail and triumph. All which things God of his mercy grant, through Jesus Christ, to whom, &c.

FINIS.